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A B S T R A C T

The present research paper has been attempted to explore dramatic techniques in the play, (Adhe Adhure) Halfway House by Mohan Rakesh. Mohan Rakesh uses unique dramatic devices such as 'The Prologue', 'One man playing five different roles' and 'Repetition and omission of language' in his play, Halfway House.

Mohan Rakesh uses unique dramatic devices such as 'The Prologue', 'One man playing five different roles' and 'Repetition and omission of language' in his play, Halfway House. The Prologue is a new idea in the technique of play-writing. It is equally controversial as critics are both for and against it. The code of playwriting does not permit the writer to address the audience directly. The Man in Black Suit is actually the writer himself. Part of the speech of the Man in Black Suit is not sustained by the later development of the play; so it becomes contradictory in itself. Yet it has its own purpose. It prepares the audience mentally to receive the play. It also partially hints at the type and purpose of the play onwards the audience is going to witness. The Prologue appears to be a modern version of the Sutradhar of Sanskrit drama.

The first male character, who is not really a participant in the action of the play but performs a special introduction to the play, is the speaker of the Prologue. The Prologue is very symbolic and it attempts to set up contraries by highlighting the concept of definite versus indefinite. Paradoxically, he says:

***The Man In a Black Suit:** (pensively flicking ash from his cigar) Once again, the same thing all over again...(stands up, as if to meet a challenge). I do not know, who you think I am, nor what you suppose I am about to say. Perhaps you think I have a well-defined function in this play-as actor, director, stage manager or something else. But you would be wrong-for, I am amorphous. And this play is as undefined as I am. (04)*

Here, the speaker suggests disappointment with the recurrent cycle of events in life. In other words, the normative circumstances of life appear stifling and static to him. In order to free himself of this state, he takes in an indefinite or amorphous state of things. He even introduces an element of suspense regarding his exact role in the play. In fact, he declares that he has no definite role to play. The implications

of 'amorphous' are - the speaker's perception that he is 'undefined', he suggests that he does not want a single conventional identity. In the context of play, in the form of the five men who come into Savitri's life projects same thing all over again. In other words, the Man in Black Suit's capability to exchange places with any other male character but represents a selfish sameness about and worthless individuality in Savitri's life. It conveys that all men behave alike in a given situation. One man playing five different roles is a unique device introduced by Mohan Rakesh in his modern play, Halfway House. The point which the playwright makes through this device is to show how conveniently and according to one's convenience the same man can put on different masks according to the situation in which he is placed.

However, the modern Indian playwright has attempted to liberate drama from heavy symbolism, use of masks and other conventional theatrical devices. It seems that for Mohan Rakesh, the struggles of the common man have become a recurrent theme in his play, therefore he left device of using masks and use the same actor for the five male characters. The device, 'One man playing five different roles' implies that the emphasis is on the human situation which has been projected through a set of human beings and not so much on those human agents themselves. Therefore, each individual does not want a single conventional identity but each individual behaves alike in a given situation.

The language of Halfway House is marvelous from the point of view of the theatre. The success of the performance of the play owes much to the kind of the language used. It is significant that Mohan Rakesh used appropriate words in the context of character's situation. The language of Halfway House is plain and simple, quite appropriate for the members of a middle-class family, but at the same time it is powerful enough to convey the tension, the mental disturbance and ir-

ritation of the characters. Simple words have been imbued with connotative meanings and implications of the context.

Repetition and omission of words project the hidden restlessness and pain of the characters. The unspoken conveys more than the spoken. For instance, when Binni wants to know something from her father but Mahendranath does not want to speak directly to daughter as:

The Older Girl: What's the matter, Daddy?

The First Man: Matter? Nothing.

The Older Girl: There is something.

The First Man: It's nothing. Your mother was just saying...

The Older Girl: What was she saying?

The First Man: Nothing...actually...I was just say-

ing...(14-15)

Thus, on the part of Mahendranath who uses hesitation and pauses to express his unwillingness to say something directly to daughter. Also, the symbolic use of words in particular critical situation is one of the qualities of Mohan Rakesh's craft. In the opening scene, the stage-properties are described as-'a disorderly living room in what was once a fairly well-to-do middle-class home, several pieces of broken furniture-sofa set, dining table, cup-board, dressing-table etc. These words represent home which lost proper function and this language obviously projects an insight into the state of affairs, the position of the characters and totally worn out but lingering on somehow in the house.

REFERENCE

1. Halfway House, a translation by Bindu Batra, Worldview Publications, Delhi, 2006.